

Eastern Montana Fire Zone AIR TACTICAL Operations Supplement 2006



**Bureau of Land Management
EMFZ Fire & Aviation
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Miles City, Montana**

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1. Mission/Policy

The purpose of this supplement is to ensure that Air Tactical operations adhere to the DOI- Aviation Policy (DM 350-354 and OPMs); the BLM 9400 manual, National, State and Unit Aviation Plans; the Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor's Guide; Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation as well as the National Business Center- Aviation Management Directorate- Contract for Flight Services.

2. Objectives

Provide aviation management expertise to ensure the safe and efficient use of aerial supervision aircraft within the Eastern Montana Fire Zone jurisdiction.

Accelerate initial attack capabilities for the Eastern Montana Fire Zone and cooperating interagency members within the Eastern Montana area.

Provide guidelines and checklists for the safe operations of air bases, aircraft, and provide a safe working environment for all personnel.

Provide guidelines for Interagency Cooperation use within the Eastern Montana Fire Zone.

3. Organization

The exclusive use contract Air Tactical unit organization consists of:

Zone FMO	Dave Overcast
Zone AFMO	Eric Lepisto
Zone AFMO	Scott McAvoy
Unit Aviation Manager	Greg Loper
Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS)	Rick Lang
** Detailer ATGS	

** The EMFZ may utilize detail personnel as needed to supplement the exclusive use or call when needed aircraft staffing requirements.

4. Contracting

All air tactical contracts shall be procured through the NBC-AMD. The Eastern Montana Fire Zone will procure one Exclusive Use aircraft for initial attack (IA). Additional aircraft may be called into the zone either on Exclusive Use, Call When Needed (CWN) contracts, Aircraft Rental Agreements (ARAs) or the utilization of Aerial Supervision Module (ASM) platforms.

An exclusive use contract will be utilized for securing the use of a Type 1 air tactical aircraft for initial attack within the Eastern Montana Fire Zone, generally for 90 days. Pilots will be rated as fully qualified air tactical pilots. An IQCS qualified ATGS shall be assigned to ensure contract requirements, agency policies and procedures are adhered to through the contract period. The contract may be modified should the agency requirements change. Request for changes will be submitted to NBC-AMD 30 days prior to completion of the normal contract period (i.e): contract extension.

4.1 Exclusive Use Contract Administration

- The Contracting Officer (CO) is a Contract Specialist from the Division of Acquisition–NBC-AMD. The CO is the appointed Government official with authority to award, modify, resolve disputes, and terminate the contract.
- The Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) is the West Area Director- NBC-AMD. The COTR is authorized by the CO to take any or all actions to ensure compliance with the technical portions of the contract. The COTR will conduct all requested or required inspections.
- The Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) is the Montana/Dakotas- BLM State Aviation Manager. The COR is authorized by the CO to confirm the contract start date and the daily schedule, issue Government property (if any) and assure the contractor performs in accordance with the contract.
- The Alternate Contracting Officer's Representatives (ACOR) will be the EMFZ - BLM Unit Aviation Manager, the zone Air Tactical Group Supervisor. The ACOR is authorized by the CO to conduct pre-use conferences, pre-use inspections, order aircraft services, secure compliance with all contract provisions and specifications, record and agree to availability and flight times, approve authorized breaks, suspend operations and complete contractor evaluations at the end of the assignment.

4.2 Aircraft Requirements

- Multi –engine turbo prop or piston engine
- High wing, 4 place seating configuration
- 4 hour average fuel endurance
- Average 165 knots cruise speed
- 780 pounds allowable payload with 225 nautical mile range
- Type 1 air tactical avionics/radio package
- ELT Transmitter
- GPS navigational system
- Automated Flight Following receiver
- Survival kit

4.3 Pre-use Requirements and Inspections

- Upon the arrival of the aircraft, a pre-use inspection will be conducted prior to placing in service.
- Check pilot and aircraft data cards for validation.
- Establish pilot flight time and duty day logs.
- Ensure flight time verification forms are signed by the pilot.
- Begin aircraft Contract Daily Diary.
- Complete Initial Briefing and review EMFZ operational procedures with pilot and crew.
- Review state and zone aviation orientation guides.

5. Aircraft Use Reports/Daily Dairies/ Contract Evaluations

- Submission of aircraft use forms (OAS23s/FS122s) will be dispensed and filed by invoice tracking number. Only the electronic templates for OAS 23's, daily dairies and contract evaluations shall be utilized for all exclusive use Air Tactical contracts within the zone. All corresponding hard copy 23's shall be destroyed upon completion of electronic template copy.
- The forms are to be completed daily by the pilot in command (PIC), entries will be verified and charge codes added by the ATGS. The OAS 23's will be submitted to AMD for vendor payment on the 1st and 15th of each month. The Unit Aviation Manager or designee will review and authorize flight payment documents as outlined in the EMFZ Aviation Operation Plan.
- The UAM shall receive copies of all flight invoices. For exclusive use contracts, this shall be accomplished by electronic filing in the MT-"N" shared drive. The UAM shall forward all subsequent contract document copies beyond the zone.

6. Daily Cost Summary Database/Daily Staffing

All associated aircraft costs and personnel staffing will be forwarded to MCC "daily" utilizing the electronic templates via e-mail or fax. Daily staffing shall be submitted by 1000 hours along with the previous days' costs.

7. Support Requirements

The Air Base Manager is authorized to complete the appropriate Blanket Purchase Order (BPA) form for all food and lodging purchases not covered on a government credit card and maintain a record on file. All supply orders shall be documented on a general message form and reviewed by the UAM and Duty Officer prior to the Logistics Coordinator obtaining corresponding resource orders for purchase.

The contracted Air Tactical pilot may be provided government purchased meals in the event of high fire activity. Lodging is always a vendor responsibility although Miles City Dispatch may make reservations on behalf of the pilot. Transportation is also the contractor's responsibility although a pilot may ride as a passenger in a government vehicle. A contract pilot shall not drive any government owned or leased vehicle.

8. Facilities

The BLM leases hangar space from the City of Miles City at the Miles City Airport. This facility is provided as protection from severe weather and for scheduled maintenance. Priorities for limited space will be to government owned aircraft first, exclusive use contract aircraft second, and CWN/ARA aircraft third. The on-site government representative (Air Base Manager or ATGS) shall authorize and coordinate parking of all aircraft within this facility on a daily basis. Ground handling of contracted aircraft shall be conducted only by employees of that vendor, unless prior documented authorization is in place. Security of contracted aircraft is a vendor responsibility.

The BLM also leases the former FAA Flight Service Station as the primary air operations office. The former SEAT Base office located in hangar # 9 may be utilized as needed for additional personnel. Each primary satellite reload base utilizes office trailers for managers and flight crews. All office, kitchen and restroom facilities are available to contract personnel. Use of government phones for contractor business is discouraged. Government owned computers shall only be utilized by government employees with a log-in for that computer. Refer to the Air Base housekeeping rules. Utilization of the FBO facilities by the contractor requires authorization by the Airport Manager.

9. Briefings

All incoming ATGS and Air Tactical pilots shall receive an initial briefing from the Unit Aviation Manager, Air Base Manager or designee as outlined in the EMFZ Aviation Orientation Guide. Detailer ATGS should be self-supporting and arrive with their own flight manager kits and vehicle. ATGS/Flight Managers shall provide pilots daily briefings as outlined in the EMFZ Aviation Orientation Guide.

10. Ground Operations

One or more contracted aircraft may be utilized by the Eastern MT Fire Zone based at the Miles City Airport or pre-positioned to one or more satellite bases for initial attack response or combined in tandem as the FMO and AFMO or Zone Duty Officer see appropriate.

- The Air Base Manager shall be the airport onsite point of contact for all tactical, logistical, procurement, and intelligence information within the zone. The zone exclusive use ATGS shall function independently as indicated in the zone table of organization, but shall work together as a team with the Air Base Manager and other Air Base personnel.
- When the Miles City Air Base has more than 2 aircraft operating on the ramp at one time, a Ramp Manager shall be designated and in place.
- Only the contractor's personnel and assigned government personnel will be allowed on the designated ramp during operations (props turning). The ATGS and SEAT/Ramp Managers are responsible for restricting the general public from the pit and taxi areas.
- As operations become more complex, a Fixed Wing Base Manager, SEAT Coordinator (SECO), Radio Operator (ABRO) or Helibase Manager may be utilized.
- Ramp area and parking areas will be cleaned of foreign objects and spills/leaks on a daily basis. Contractors will clean and wash ramps after washing aircraft.
- Traffic cones will be placed to delineate ramp area and taxi patterns for local aircraft.
- HazMat waste kit and halogen extinguisher will be placed adjacent to ramp area for easy access by ground crews.
- The ATGS shall confirm with contractor that fuel arrangements have been made or that the fixed base operator will have appropriate fuel available.

11. Aircraft Operating Procedures

- ATGSs shall ensure daily pre-operations briefings that include:
 - Map of last 24-hour lightning occurrences
 - Forecasted weather for next 24-hour period
 - Expected fire behavior and fire activity
 - Changes in radio frequencies (ramp, flight following and tactical)
 - Other local and regional aircraft assigned.
- Pilots will perform pre-flight, ground radio checks on aircraft at the start of each duty day to ensure flight readiness within the first 15 minutes of the duty day.
- Pilots shall perform weight and balance performance calculations as conditions dictate as per the contract and Federal Aviation Regulations.
- ATGSs will notify the pilot of a flight request providing the aircraft dispatch form with the required dispatch information as soon as possible prior to take off. Information from aviation dispatch will be checked for completeness and forwarded to each pilot.
- The Management expectation is 15 minutes response from the time the ATGS receives the dispatch form to the time the aircraft leaves the ground.
- The exclusive use aircraft vendor will be first in rotation at the beginning of each day. A rotation list will be set up and posted to ensure proper rotation of aircraft.
- All EMFZ assigned aircraft shall adhere to the assigned frequencies as outlined in the communications plan.
- Once all functional checks are completed, the ATGS will contact the Ramp Manager on ramp frequency for taxi clearance.
- Upon turning onto the active runway, the aircraft will go into a sterile cockpit mode until reaching cruising altitudes; then the pilot will establish contact with dispatch for flight following every 15 minutes. An ATGS may assume flight following duties on scene of an incident for other tactical aircraft as long as positive contact is maintained on VHF-AM (Victor).

- The ATGS will establish contact with ground forces and other aircraft on the assigned tactical frequencies as soon as possible. Refer to the Fire Traffic Area (FTA) in the EMFZ Aviation Orientation Guide.
- An Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) shall be utilized whenever possible when more than two tactical aircraft are over an incident at one time. MCC shall notify the ATGS or IC if a SEAT pilot is Level II qualified.
- Should an ATGS not be available during initial attack, the Incident Commander, Duty Officer, Unit Aviation Manager and/or the Aviation Dispatcher may direct and space aircraft, in order to allow for only one aircraft over the incident at any give time if necessary. In a multiple aircraft situation, aircraft will maintain a five mile holding buffer zone outside of the incident operation airspace. Refer to the FTA in the EMFZ Aviation Orientation Guide.
- Additional passengers may accompany an ATGS on an air tactical mission with authorization from the UAM and Duty Officer and documentation that it is essential for the mission. This also applies to reconnaissance missions that transition on scene to an air tactical mission. In the event of an incomplete recon, the ATGS is responsible to notify the Aircraft Dispatcher that the original mission cannot be completed and identify that portion.
- For overdue procedures, refer to the Aviation Mishap Response Plan maintained by the Zone Aircraft Dispatcher.
- The ATGS may maintain flight following with ground forces on the incident, but upon completion of the mission, the ATGS will re-establish contact with dispatch for flight following and for further instructions or changes. See Zone Aviation Operations Plan for automated flight following procedures.
- Approximately 5 minutes from base, the ATGS will call in a present location and go into a sterile cockpit mode until off the runway. Then switching back to the ramp frequency, shall receive clearance for parking.

12. Reconnaissance/Detection

- The purpose of aerial reconnaissance or detection flights is to locate and relay fire information to fire management. Only qualified Air Tactical Group Supervisors, Air Tactical Supervisors (ATS-ASM) and Lead Plane Pilots have the training and authority to coordinate fixed and rotor wing aerial firefighting operations. Flights with a “Recon” designation should communicate with tactical aircraft only to announce location, elevation and to relay departure direction and altitude.
- All aerial reconnaissance missions shall receive a way point map of the intended route from the MCD Aircraft Dispatcher prior to the mission being performed.
- The EMFZ shall only utilize aerial observers as approved by the Duty Officer or UAM. Aerial Observers shall receive annual safety training and possesses the Flight Manager qualification.

13. Safety

In the event of an aircraft fire or other emergency promptly declare “may-day” on the radio and Miles City Dispatch shall activate the Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Plan.

- The refueling port must be clearly marked as to type of fuel.
- Over the wing, refueling is prohibited while props are turning.
- All government personnel are restricted in aiding the refueling of the aircraft unless deemed necessary by the pilot in an emergency situation. Non-essential personnel shall maintain a minimum distance of 50’ from the aircraft during refueling.
- The fueling operation will be conducted in a secure area, without presenting a hazard to facilities or other aircraft.
- Any accident, maintenance issue, incident with potential or near miss mid-air collision shall be reported as soon as practical to the UAM with follow-up submission of a SAFECOM.

14. Security

- All EMFZ aircraft bases shall have a posted security plan in place.
- Do not give out the vehicle gate access code to anyone; the Airport Manager is the only one to authorize access.
- Do not give out the Air Base or hangar door access code to unauthorized personnel.
- All vehicles on the ramp shall have either a flashing light, checkered flag or Unicom radio.
- Only vehicles essential for operations are allowed on the ramp.
- A government Ramp Manager shall be in place while government owned or contracted aircraft are taxing.
- All government/contractor personnel on the ramp shall be under control of a Ramp Manager or have a Unicom radio.
- No exiting from Air Base office while commercial aircraft are taxing or parked at the terminal,
(enter ramp from the south).

15. Aircraft Fuel/Ramp

The two types of fuel that will be used at the bases are Jet A and 100 LL AV-gas. Fuel spills should be handled as such:

Fuel spilling from aircraft or equipment will require that all loading operations be suspended immediately. Any form of fuel spill will be reported to the Air Base Manager, Unit Aviation Manager or airport authority as soon as possible. A determination will be made by one of these persons if operations can continue or should be suspended, and a corrective action will be taken. A spill presents a potential fire hazard and should be treated as such. Spills should be cleaned up immediately with absorbent pads, oil dry, or sawdust. Washing the spill away is prohibitive due to environmental concerns. Used absorbent materials should be placed in metal containers with closeable lids. Large spills should be blanketed with foam to reduce fire hazard.

Spills in excess of 25 gallons must be reported to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality hotline at (406) 444-5976.

Special Note: For both retardant and fuel spills on the ramp at the Miles City Airbase, affected storm drains shall be immediately plugged to prevent entry into the storm drain system. Aircraft wash downs shall be performed away from the storm drain system as designated by the Airport Manager.

16. Zone Bases/Airports

<u>Airstrip</u>	<u>Fuel</u>	<u>Runway</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Elevation</u>	<u>Location</u>
Baker	100 LL Jet A	Asphalt	4900x75	2971	46-21-5N 104-15-0W
Billings	100 LL Jet A	Asphalt	10520x75	3649	45-48-5N 108-32-6W
Broadus	None	Asphalt	4400x75	3280	45-28-21N 105-27-13W
Buffalo, SD	100LL	Asphalt	3900x60	2889	45-34-83N 103-31-78W
Colstrip	None	Asphalt	5100x75	3425	45-51-2N 106-42-6W
Ekalaka	None	Asphalt	3700x75	3503	45-52-68N 104-52-6W
Glasgow	100 LL Jet A	Asphalt	4999x75	2294	48-12-7N 106-36-9W
Jordan	None	Asphalt	4000x75	2662	47-20-0N 106 56-4W
Lewistown	100 LL Jet A	Asphalt	5600x100	4167	47-02-9N 109-28-0W
Miles City	100 LL Jet A	Asphalt	5880x100	2628	46-25-7N 105-53-2W
Roundup	100LL	Asphalt	5100x75	3485	46-28-41N 108-33-46W
Laurel	100LL	Asphalt	3775x50	3515	45-42-19N 108-45-67W

Sheridan,WY	100LL	Asphalt	8300x100	4024	44-46-15N
	Jet A				106-58-82W

17. Communications/Frequencies

All aircraft operations within the Eastern Montana Fire Zone will follow the tactical frequency sequence plan in the Aviation Operation Plan and MT/Dakotas Aviation Orientation Guide.

Ramp Frequency----- VHF AM---RX and TX----- 123.975

- Use for aircraft ground operations. Ramp is defined as the designated area for loading aircraft marked off by traffic cones. Pilots shall switch to assigned ramp frequency any time aircraft are moving inside the traffic cones.
- The use of Unicom at the primary satellite reload bases requires authorization from the appropriate Airport Manager.

Flight Following Frequency

FM---RX and TX---- 168.650

- Use for aircraft to MCD -- 15 minute position checks, this frequency should not be used for tactical use.
- See Zone Aviation Operations Plan for automated flight following procedures.

Tactical VHF-FM Air to Ground and tactical VHF-AM (Victor) Air-to-Air frequencies are renewed annually. Refer to the frequency zone map in the EMFZ Aviation Orientation Guide.

18. Summary

This document is supplemental specific to EMFZ Aviation Operation Plan. It shall be reviewed and updated annually by the zone Air Tactical organization staff, with completion prior to December 1st. The primary operational guides for air tactical operations within the zone are the Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor's Guide and the Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation-Red Book. The EMFZ Aviation Orientation Guide contains additional zone specific information.